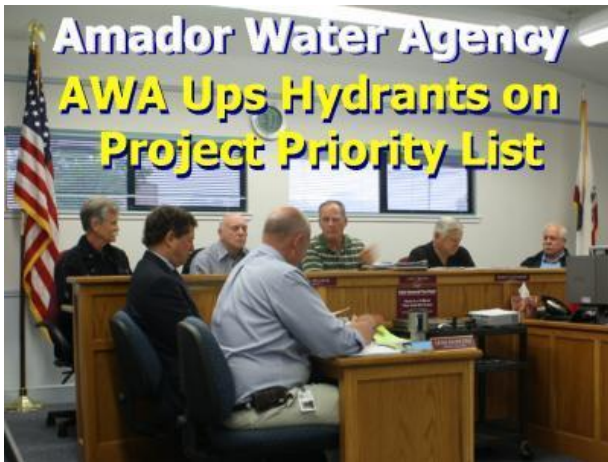


SNC TO GRANT \$5 MILLION TO CONSERVE RANCH, FARM "WORKING LANDSCAPES"

June 26, 2012 By Jim Reece



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Amador County – The Sierra Nevada Conservancy announced last week that approximately \$5 million in conservation grants are now available to organizations working with ranchers and farmers in the Sierra Nevada region on “working landscapes.”

The grants are funded by Proposition 84, for projects that must provide a public benefit. Sierra Nevada Conservancy Executive Officer Jim Branham said “ranching and farming has a rich and important place in the heritage of the Sierra, so preserving that heritage is critical to our future. Cattle graze the Sierra in the spring and summer, and farmers work their fields many months of the year.”

Branham said “if ranchers and farmers need assistance with projects or plans that help conserve or restore land and water resources, we invite them to work with eligible organizations to apply.”

Eligible applicants include public agencies, qualifying nonprofit organizations whose charitable purposes are consistent with the purposes of the SNC, and eligible tribal organizations.

The “Proposition 84 Preservation of Ranches and Agricultural Lands Grant Program” is more narrowly focused on ranches and agricultural lands, Branham said. Examples of possible projects to be considered for funding must meet certain criteria. They should reduce erosion, restore riparian integrity, restore meadows or provide for natural stream flow and stream structure. The projects should manage grazing along riparian corridors or meadows, including fencing or new water storage, for the purpose of reducing erosion, improving habitat function, and/or improving water quality.

Another example is water conservation projects to reduce agriculturally induced surface water and groundwater contamination. Another is to protect ranches and agricultural lands and associated watershed resources (such as streams, meadows and wetlands) through the use of conservation easements.

Another is grazing management or agricultural management practices that improve overall habitat conditions for habitat or stream connectivity for fish and wildlife species across working landscapes; or “pre-project administrative work such as permits, and environmental protection documents. He said “applications that are solely for the purpose of acquiring equipment or title to real property are not eligible for funding.”

Conservancy staff will be available to work with applicants during the first phase of the process, which ends July 16.

Branham said because this is a new focus for our grant program, “we are eager to reach out to the ranchers and farmers in the Sierra to help them partner with eligible applicants and move through this process.”

He said it was “a great opportunity to work with our staff to create the best application possible.”

For complete information contact the Sierra Nevada Conservancy or go to SierraNevada.ca.gov.